DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 283 657 RC 016 295

AUTHOR Montalvo, Frank F.
TITLE Skin Color and Latinos: The Origins and Contemporary Patterns of Ethnoracial Ambiguity among Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans. Report Number 1.
INSTITUTION Our Lady of the Lake Univ., San Antonio, Tex.
PUB DATE 87
NOTE 72p.
AVAILABLE FROM Intercultural Institute, Our Lady of the Lake University of San Antonio, 411 S.W. 24th St., San Antonio, TX 78285 ($5.50).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Acculturation; Ambiguity; Cultural Context; *Cultural Images; Ethnic Bias; Ethnic Discrimination; *Ethnicity; Ethnic Origins; Hispanic American Culture; *Hispanic Americans; Latin American Culture; Mental Health; Mexican Americans; Puerto Ricans; Racial Bias; Racial Discrimination; *Racial Identification; Self Concept; Social Integration; *Social Problems; Sociocultural Patterns; Well Being
IDENTIFIERS Latinos; *Skin Color

ABSTRACT

Failure to understand the role of skin color in the development of ethnoracial identity among Hispanic Americans has led to continued psychic and educational problems for them, hidden the cause of real and potential divisiveness in the community, and prevented the development of effective strategies for overcoming ethnic prejudice. The ethnic group's emphasis on cultural identity is reinforced by a need to conceal its racial roots as evidence of heterogeneity and dissimilarity from the dominant society in order to prevent the social and psychological consequences that differential assimilation on the basis of race has on its members. The result is a slowing of the acculturation process where the pull toward reaping the potential educational, economic, and political rewards of cultural adaptation is balanced against the eventual demise of the Hispanic family and community. Part I of this paper presents key propositions that are derived from this report and lays out problems created for Latinos by their efforts to integrate into America's biracial society. Part II discusses the development of phenotypes, race prejudice, ambiguous social relationships in Latin America, and the denial of race as an issue in the peoples' cultural identity. Part III examines the impact of skin color prejudice on contemporary Puerto Ricans and Mexican Americans. Part IV discusses the report's implications for social research. An extensive reference list is included. (JHZ)

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Skin Color and Latinos

The Origins and Contemporary Patterns of Ethnoracial Ambiguity Among Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans

Frank F. Montalvo, DSW

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Institute for Intercultural Studies
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Worden School of Social Service
Our Lady of the Lake University of San Antonio
San Antonio, Texas

1987

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Frank F. Montalvo, DSW

Institute for Intercultural Studies

and

Worden School of Social Service

Our Lady of the Lake University of San Antonio
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Report Number I

1987

DEDICATION

I have had a dream that

My four children will one day

Live in a nation where they

Will not be judged by the color

Of their skin, but by the content

Of their character.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
The Lincoln Memorial
Washington, D.C.
August, 1963

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SKIN COLOR AND LATINOS

F. F. MONTALVO

ABSTRACT

This report analyzes the problems that skin color prejudice has created for many Latinos in Latin America and the United States. Through historical and empirical studies the roots of the Latinos' ethnoracial ambiguity were examined in the Puerto Rican experience, as well as their expressions in the contemporary life of Mexican Americans.

The lack of concerted effort to understand the role of skin color in the development of the ethnoracial identity among Hispanic Americans has led to continued psychic and educational problems for them, hidden the causes of real and potential divisiveness in the community, and prevented the development of effective strategies for overcoming ethnic prejudice. A call for the study of institutional and interpersonal racial barriers was made in view of the paucity of current scientific study into the effect of skin coloration on the Latinos' lifestyle pursuits. The report concludes that the ethnic group's emphasis on cultural identity is reinforced by a need to conceal its racial roots as evidence of heterogeneity and dissimilarity from the dominant society in order to prevent the social and psychological consequences that differential assimilation on the basis of race has on its members. The result is a slowing of the acculturation process where the pull toward reaping the potential educational, economic, and political rewards of cultural adaptation is balanced against the eventual demise of the Hispanic family and community.

PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT

The problem of skin color to Americans in the United States has been intransigent. This report aims to inform the reader about the issue of race as it is reflected in the skin coloration of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans and how it has affected their ethnoracial identity and their psychological and social adjustment. It is also written to provoke the reader to thought and action by proposing that skin color is a critical variable that has been overlooked by researchers in their study of acculturation and assimilation of Latinos into American life, ignored by social service and mental health practitioners in their assessment and treatment of human problems, and hidden by the general public and the Hispanic communities as a painful and persistent reality in their lives.

Accordingly, Part I, The Scope of the Problem, presents key propositions that are derived from this report, the inherent problems created for Latinos by their efforts to integrate into America's biracial society, and the lack of empirical knowledge concerning the effects of skin color prejudice on their mental health.

Part II, Historical Roots of Ethnoracial Identity, discusses the development of phenotypes, race prejudice, ambiguous social relationships in Latin America, and the denial of race as an issue in the peoples' cultural identity. It draws on the common experiences of Hispanic groups and compares Latin and North American adjustment patterns.

Part III, Coping with Skin Color in the United States, traces the impact of skin color prejudice on contemporary Puerto Ricans and Mexican Americans, and the confusion and psychosocial ramifications created by the ethnoracial source of their dilemma. Part IV discusses the report's implications for social research and theory and for the future of the Hispanic community.

In a recent public statement in the Sunday supplement, Vista, about skin color, the first to our knowledge, Herrera (1986) notes that the problem is a deeply embedded pan-Hispanic issue that requires frank acknowledgement:

> And it's not just among Chicanos that the problem exists. The attitude is shared by Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Central Americans and others, light or dark, rich or poor. From the San Joaquin Valley to the Bronx, from East Los Angeles to Miami: Light is better.
>
> For years we have challenged the limits imposed on us by institutions due to our accents, culture or language. In spite of great strides we continue to wrestle - in unspoken ways - with the color question. The first step in solving the problem is admitting its existence. We do discriminate on the basis of color. How often we hear expressions of sympathy simply because a person is dark. "Why?" I always ask (p. 3).

The import of Herrera's question pertains as much to the Hispanic community's attitude toward itself as to society's predisposition toward Latinos. Our aim in this report is to understand why the community's racial heterogeneity is kept from its collective consciousness and from being a subject for intellectual analysis.

For purposes of clarification, Latino and Hispanic are used interchangeably although the former's preferred use is as a noun. Latino tends to refer to people born in the Caribbean or Americas whose cultural base is strongly Iberian with cultural and genealogical roots also placed in Indian and/or African soil. Hispano, source of Hispanic (adjective), lacks this American derivation. Also, Mexican American and Chicano are used interchangeably in keeping with the cited author's preference.

Ethnoracial minorities are persons with cultural identities and phenotypes that vary from those of society's dominant group members. In this report, the status of an ethnoracial minority is attributed to members of indigenous Hispanic groups who were permanently and involuntarily incorporated as citizens into the United States as a result of military conquest. It is applied primarily to Mexican Americans who became citizens as a consequence of the Mexican War (1846-1848) and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which guaranteed cultural autonomy and continuance of property and legal rights; and to Puerto Ricans, who were granted citizenship in 1917 as a result of the Spanish-American War of 1898 and the annexation of Puerto Rico.

The involuntary nature of their status as conquered people is not an arbitrary distinction according to Burkey, 1978:

> Later patterns of ethnic relations within a system of dominance are often related to the manner of its origins. The relationship between a dominant group and a subordinate group that began with conquest generally is quite different from one that originated with the voluntary immigration of a subordinate group.... Since the conquered peoples are "charter members" of certain areas of society, they are less likely to assimilate into the dominant group and are more likely to maintain a certain degree of cultural distinctiveness from the dominant group (p. 67). In time (or immediately) racial classifications may develop whereby phenotype takes precedence over cultural and linguistic characteristics in the allocation of rewards (p. 75).

The analysis of the intricate relationships between culture and physical features in structuring relationships within Hispanic communities and between them and Anglo Americans (and other minorities) is a central focus of this report.

As additional clarification, the descriptive term Anglo American, or Anglo, refers to United States citizens of white, European ancestry as the predominant cultural group without reference to their ethnic or national derivations. The term Black is used as a proper noun to refer primarily to citizens in the continental United States of African ancestry who are not Latinos.

PART I

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

Key Propositions

LeVine and Padilla (1980) in their fine book on pluralistic counseling point out that the differences between and within the Hispanic and Anglo American cultures in the United States are less important than "that the differences are vast enough to make Hispanics easy targets for prejudice and discrimination" (p. 259). Therefore, most Latinos are more concerned than Anglos about issues of skin color, achieving a bicultural and bilingual style, and coping with poverty. "The critical factor is that individuals are aware of their options and feel free to follow the life-style of their choice" (p. 262-3).

Options in life-style pursuits are delineated along racial lines in societies that grant or withhold status in accordance with light or dark skin. Therefore, phenotyping has greater significance than the categorization of people according to physical appearance. It is defined here as the process of ascribing social consequences to variations in skin color and physiognomy where, at the extremes, light skin and Caucasian features that are attributed to Europeans are valued more highly than dark skin and Indian and African appearance. A unique feature of the Hispanic population is its variation in racial characteristics and adherence to common language and culture. Consequently, we propose that variation in skin color, the more salient and common estimate used in phenotyping, is significantly associated with within-group differences in socialization, ethnic identity, social and self-acceptance, mobility, and psychological adjustment.

In this respect, the light-skinned Latino is compared with the European immigrant. De Anda (1984) notes that "similarities in physical appearance make it easier for the European immigrant to blend into the American populace and,

thereby, be privy to an 'insider's' socialization experience. By contrast, ethnic minorities whose physical appearance is dissimilar are more likely to experience socialization as pressure [to acculturate] exerted upon 'outsiders'" (p. 106).

The light-skinned Latinos, however, experience cross-pressures to disengage from their ethnic reference group in order to become "insiders" while they remain loyal to their cultural and family heritage. For both, the crucial intervening factor is the extent to which they define these pressures as problems in developing a coherent identity. The effects of phenotyping on acculturation are not straightforward. Light and dark-skinned members are tied to each other by their common culture, family affiliations and affection, and, most importantly, by their shared minority status. Understanding the bond's impact on their individual adjustment and on the group's transactions with the dominant society is a major focus of this report.

We propose that the Hispanic community attempts to maintain its social and psychological integrity by emphasizing culture as the sole source of the group's identity. This accommodation also serves to disguise the potent and divisive influence that skin color has on its family members who must cope with a society that values whiteness and denigrates people of color.

The ideology of equality compels society to support the Hispanic community's dismissing the significance of its racial heterogeneity, which in turn reinforces the society's claim that the sole barrier towards assimilation is due to the group's unwillingness or inability to acculturate rather than to racial prejudice. The origin of this social arrangement is Latin American, although its contemporary pattern is North American. Understanding both, however, is essential for freeing Latinos to improve their life chances.

Acculturation and Assimilation: A Problematic Two-step, Two-way Process

It is important to view the Hispanic peoples' integration into American society as a two-step, two-way process that involves first learning the ways of the dominant culture, formally through education and informally through social interaction, as the process of acculturation, and then being invited to become a member of the inner social circles of the dominant group, the process described by Gordon (1964) as assimilation into the social structure. Acculturation is voluntary and within the ethnic person's control, but it does not guarantee winning the role, benefits, and status as a dominant group member. Both processes, however, are highly problematic for the Hispanic community.

Latinos may seek to become members in the dominant group by first acculturating to all its values and beliefs. This, however, often requires them to think as majority members do toward minorities, hence toward part of themselves and their families.

> These groups have failed to adapt to the American melting pot because they are differentiated on the basis of racial criteria and in assimilating into the dominant American culture, these groups internalize the stigma and the self-hatred ingrained in that culture against the people of color (Seda Bonilla, 1970, p. 1).

Consequently, rejection of one's ethnoracial heritage is invariably tangled up with rejection of one's self. Latinos who seek such unilateral solutions to become like "them" often blame their cultural roots for their pain and denigrate the symbols of their dilemma, such as language and family heritage. The impact is felt equally by light and dark skinned Latinos.

It is not the minority individual's choice, but the dominant group's decision as to who is recruited and assimilated into its ranks and becomes a candidate for power, security, and influence. Many may apply, but few are

chosen despite their effort to think, feel, and behave as members do. "If the minority is non-white, [acculturation] may occur without the minority's subsequent structural assimilation" (Murguia, 1975, p. 47).

In this sense, membership in Anglo American primary groups is a measure of assimilation and with it comes an intensification of learning and of being socialized into the dominant group, for people tend to share the same attitudes as their friends, and having similar attitudes, in turn, is proof that they belong. Add to this the observation that people tend to select their spouses from their circle of friends, which facilitates what Gordon (1964) refers to as the marital assimilation of ethnic groups. This is why interethnic and interracial dating may disturb many parents and why gate-keeping is a necessary function in the social assimilation process (Lampe, 1982). It may be of concern to ethnic peers who view such dating with suspicion as implied rejection of them and to family relatives who protectively fear problematic consequences of an interethnic marriage. Lampe's data revealed that half of the respondents would consider interethnic marriages, although this was not the intent of their desire to date (Ibid, p. 125).

The relationship between intermarriage, acculturation, and assimilation of the Latino spouse remains unclear without considering the motivation for marriage, the couple's relative social status, and the ethnic density of their chosen residential area. Nevertheless, prevailing local attitudes toward acceptable social integration may have limited the rate of marriages between Chicanos and Anglos in the Southwest to 13%, while elsewhere in the United States Chicanos intermarry at the rate of 38% (Arce and Abney, 1982).

That race also plays an important role in the Latino's rate of intermarriage with non-Latinos is suggested by the Puerto Rican and Cuban experience in New York City (Gurak, 1982). The rates of marriages by Puerto Ricans with non-Hispanics have remained the lowest of all Hispanic groups in the

city and about the same over the years (15%). They were also the only group whose intermarriage rate did not increase during succeeding generations. Their rate was less than half of Cubans, who had a higher exogamy rate for first (32%) and second (45%) generations. Gurak was uncertain of the reason for the unusually low Puerto Rican rate except that they were the poorest and the most residentially segregated of all Hispanic groups in New York City. As cited later in this report, Puerto Ricans have a higher number and proportion of non-whites in their group than Cubans.

Assimilation presents Latinos with both the democratic promise of reward for individual effort and motivation to acculturate, as well as with the reality that the opportunities for some are limited while for others assimilation may be gained at high personal cost. Acknowledging the influence of race prejudice in limiting opportunities increases the likelihood that the problems will be attributed to external barriers and thereby reveal the contradictions in the avowed ideology of an open class society. Public denial of the role that racial attitudes play preserves assimilation as an incentive, but increases the likelihood that the problems will be attributed to deficiency in individuals, their motivation to acculturate, and their cultural differences.

The denial of race as a real barrier to social assimilation is not new. Its roots took hold during the colonization of Latin America, but accommodations to its trichotomous caste system of white, intermediate, and dark provided greater social latitude for non-whites than the rigidly dichotomous biracial arrangement found in the United States. The former allowed for greater acceptance of coloration within the family, the latter rejects it.

The clash of different beliefs and attitudes about skin color in the United States has been described as particularly evident among Puerto Ricans, whose ancestors include African slaves, white colonists from Spain, and, to a much lesser extent, native island Indians. Their migration from Puerto Rico to the

United States, however, dramatizes the racial quandary that is involved in assimilation and that has implications for other Caribbean Latinos and for Central and South American immigrants. Among Mexican Americans and the latter groups, Indian and mestizo ancestry and appearance are more at issue than negritude. Nevertheless, parallels will be drawn between Hispanic groups with African and Indian lineage.

State of Empirical Knowledge

While racial prejudice toward dark people among Americans in the United States is well documented, its existence in Hispanic American communities, its impact on the individual's self-worth, and its reinforcement through majority-minority relations are not.

Researchers have made a point that "there is little research on the psychological effects of dark skin on Mexican Americans and other Hispanic people" (LeVine and Padilla, 1980, p. 177). Arce (1981, p. 180) also observed that "there is no empirical research for any period in our history that sheds light on the racial and color components of the Chicano identity...." Cota-Robles de Suarez (1971) and Maldonado and Cross (1977) were the only studies found that dealt directly with Mexican American attitudes toward skin color in relation to their personal and social identity. Hurstfield's (1978) study of young adolescents is also pertinent. They studied children and the results are reviewed elsewhere in this report. The only clinical reference discovered concerning the effects of skin color prejudice on Hispanic personality development was first reported in 1950 by Eric Berne (1959/1983). It is also referred to later in this report.

Personal communication from practitioners in the mental health and human service fields notes the frequent reference to skin color by Latinos as an

important influence in their lives. Yet, we are wont to explain its omission from consistent empirical scrutiny and public discussion. For example, race was not cited as a factor in a variety of adjustment problems discussed by professionals attending seminars in New York City and in Puerto Rico (Curren, Rivera, and Sanchez, 1975); save for this author's brief discussion in 1985, it was absent from the First and Second Annual Effective Psychotherapy with Hispanics conferences in 1984 and 1985 conducted in San Antonio, Texas. LeVine and Padilla's (1980) only reference to skin color in counseling was Longres's 1974 descriptive article about Puerto Ricans. It was not cited by Ramirez (1983) as a factor in the Latino's multicultural identity and mental health in the Americas. Skin color is not used as a variable in the published measurements of acculturation used among Mexican Americans (Cuellar, Harris, and Jasso, 1980; Padilla, 1980) and Cuban Americans (Szapocznik and Kurtiness, 1980). Hispanic Mental Health Research: A Reference Guide, compiled by Newton, Olmedo, and Padilla (1982), omitted descriptors for race or skin color for over 2,000 studies, indicating a lack of attention in the research community. As a consequence, the adaptive model developed by Cervantes and Castro (1985), which is based on the state of mental health research on Mexican Americans, simply posed racial discrimination as a potential stress situation that might evoke culturally-specific coping responses. An attempt will be made later in this report to explain this curious state of affairs: the colorblind study of Latinos.

Nevertheless, concern that the racial issue is neglected has been voiced before in view of its reality in the lives of Latinos. Most Chicanos are likely to be mestizo (part Indian and part Spaniard) and regardless of physical appearance ethnoracial boundaries were drawn in the Southwest by whites from the beginning.

> What emerges clearly, however, from the journals, newspapers, government records, and literature about

> Chicanos from the first westward movement by whites up to the present, is that whites, as the dominant group, have always perceived Chicanos as an ethnic and a racial group distinctly different from their own. This perception, futhermore, was reflected in segregationist public policies, laws, and the separationist etiquette that delineated acceptable patterns of interaction between whites and Chicanos. As such, race necessarily constituted a determinant variable in the rate of progress of Chicano cultural assimilation (Arce, 1981, p. 180) [Emphasis in original].

Discrimination on the basis of color throughout history has also been described by Acuna (1981), Barrera (1979), Beals (1955/1969), deLeon (1983), Elizondo (1983), Forbes (1968), Gamio (1930), Grebler, Moore, and Guzman (1970), Moore (1970), McWilliams (1948), Murgia (1975), Rosenbaum (1981), and Vigil (1980). Yet, the 1930 census's listing of Mexican Americans as non-white was vehemently opposed by middle-class, Hispanic civic groups as inaccurate.

The issue of skin color among Puerto Ricans has been addressed briefly but sometimes forcefully by practitioners in recent years (Comas-Diaz and Minrath, 1985; Christensen, 1975; Longres, 1974; Mizio, 1979), but not with the attention that is warranted as the result of extensive sociological and anthropological inquiry into comparison of island and United States experiences (Betances, 1972; Gordon, 1949 and 1950; Mills, Senior, and Goldsen, 1950; Rogler, 1946 and 1948; Seda Bonilla, 1961; Sereno, 1946; and Tumin and Feldman, 1961/1969). These studies remain seminal despite their dates.

The extensive examinations by social scientists of the psychosocial impact of color on Latinos provide the basis for our inquiry into its effect on Hispanic ethnic identity.

PART II

HISTORICAL ROOTS OF ETHNORACIAL IDENTITY

Origins of Phenotypes and Acceptance of Coloration

The immediate source of the color continuum among Latinos should be fairly obvious, although its roots may not be. American brunettes marry fair-haired young men as often as blondes do. Similarly, without a sharp black-white racial splitting of the community in Latin America, dark-skinned Latinos marry light-skinned Latinos and vice versa. Such unions are not referred to as miscegenation, a term conjured up by North American anti-abolitionist reporters, for there is no equivalent word in the Spanish language. In Cuba the non-white population is approximately 30%; in Brazil it is about 40%; in Puerto Rico it is conservatively estimated to be over 50%; and in Mexico the estimated Indian and mestizo population is over 80% (Forbes, 1968, p. 57; Gurak, 1982, p. 104; Harris, 1964, p. 85, 128, and 132; Longres, 1974, p. 69).

Their origin did not indicate a greater color tolerance by Iberians than by North American and South African colonists, whose number of mixed racial offspring is considered to be proportionately just as many (Harris, 1964, p. 68). Given the power, need, and opportunity, colonists mate with native populations without regard to color or ancestry in Latin and North America, in Africa, or, for that matter, on Pitcairn Island of "Mutiny on the Bounty" fame. Rather, the rule of racial descent, by which the illegitimate children of slaves and white colonists were condemned to slavery, was absent or nearly so and created the acceptance of the coloration of the population that we are today (Harris, 1964, p. 79-89).

The near absence of such a rule was partly ideological and historical in that slavery was considered an accident of conquest of one group over another rather than the inherent destiny of an unfortunate people. The treatment of

slaves as prisoners of war harkens back to the five-hundred year occupation of Christian Spain by darker Islamic Moors, which finally ended on the eve of colonial expansion in 1492. Furthermore, Chapman (1933) noted that most Spaniards came from the Andalusian region of Spain, which was the center of the Moors' occupation of that country. This suggests that their predisposition towards peoples in the Americas was a mixture of a concern for maintaining their privileged status as colonists as well as an acceptance of their native Indian offspring.

Elizondo (1983) states that the Spaniards in Mexico and Latin America were concerned with the "salvation" of the peoples they discovered and while racists they were not racial purists allowing the native offspring to assume their names and parentage. "Racial mixing was not discouraged by the Catholic Kings or by the Vatican," which gave rise to "a new ethos - la raza mestiza ('the mixed clan, family' or 'race')" (p. 10). The consequences were not only racial, but cultural and symbolic as the Catholic missionaries "attempted to destroy what physical violence could not touch: the soul of the indigenous people" (p. 11). The emergence of the Mexican identity began with the apparition to an Indian peasant of Our Lady of Guadalupe, significantly known as La Morenita ("the brown lady").

> The cultural clash of sixteenth-century Spain and Mexico was resolved and reconciled in the brown Lady of Guadalupe. In her the new mestizo people finds its meaning, its uniqueness, its unity. Guadalupe is the key to understanding the Christianity of the New World, the self-image of Mexicans, of Mexican-Americans, and of all Latin Americans (p. 12).

Equally significant in understanding the acceptance of coloration was the material advantage for white, Latin male colonists, who were few in number, with

still fewer white women, to create and maintain an intermediate group of free loyal persons to oversee plantations and carry out essential administrative, police, and military functions (Harris, 1964, p. 86-7). Such a buffer function played by intermediaries was not peculiar to Latin America. The role has been played by the available poor whites in the United States, non-black immigrant groups in northern Africa, and "mixed coloreds" in South Africa. The point is that interracial relationships and children did not result so much from liberal attitudes but that they were developed and "were reinforced by family ties over the course of time" (Gordon, 1949, p. 386).

Race Prejudice in Latin America: The Spanish Myth

It is said that "one drop" of African or Indian ancestry is considered inconsequential in Latin America and that one can "marry up." Yet, the preferred marriage partner is racial and bloodlined, not strictly social. Economic, occupational, and residential patterns in Puerto Rico and elsewhere in Latin America belie the belief that they are racial paradises and that prejudice is entirely social class oriented. The lopsided, two-tiered societies in many Latin American countries of the very few rich and the very many poor reveal the racial attitudes that exist when European lineage and purity are valued and remain hallmarks of upper class membership. For example, in 18th Century Puerto Rico all free children of color were educated and there was no government-instituted discrimination.

> Marriage, though, especially in the upper classes, was another matter. Some families endured ludicrous trials, known as <u>limpieza de sangre</u> ("blood purification") to prove that no African blood flowed through their veins, thus entitling their members to marry into another "good" family (Wagenheim, 1970, p. 157).

From the beginning Spanish lineage in Puerto Rico was equivalent to having "blue blood" (Betances, 1972, p. 51), royalty unpenetrable by social mobility: "To be white is a species of nobility in a country where slaves and people of color form the lower rank of society" (Flinter, 1934, as quoted by Gordon, 1950, p. 384) [Emphasis in original].

To the Europeans, the American-born Spaniard, ladino or criollo, was usually regarded as non-white, regardless of skin color or genealogy. It was most likely that the criollo's forefathers were originally from the lower class in Spain since nobility or wealthy Spaniards seldom emigrated (Chapman, 1933, p. 109). While he may have accumulated wealth in the "new world", the criollo's origins and subsequent history in the Americas created self-doubt and a yearning for reassurance.

> In point of wealth, the American Spaniard could always look down upon the newcomers from Spain....In point of colour he could not; for, as we know, there never was complete certainty as to the whiteness of an American-Spanish family (Madariaga, 1948, as quoted by Gordon, 1950, p. 384).

It was to the poorer Spanish immigrant's advantage to exploit the host's sensitivity to "pure blood" since it was his primary source of acceptance and entry into the wealthy creole society. And it was eagerly sought:

> The Creole, from nearly white to nearly black, sought in the name Spaniard a guarantee of white blood. Not till now can we gauge in all their depth the motives which for three centuries gave such an anomalous meaning to the word 'Spaniard' in the Indies (Gordon, Ibid).

The Spaniard's sociocultural dominance, as Chapman (1933) noted, served as a seedbed for interclass and interracial animosity:

> If a man wished truly to be of the super-elite in Spanish America, he had to make certain that his mother was in Spain at the time of his birth....The creole women... sought the more socially prominent as husbands, and the merest Spanish clerk had a better chance to win the fairest of the fair than the richest and generally most eligible creole noble....Quite naturally the Spaniard despised the creole, and the creole hated the Spaniard. This, indeed was a characteristic attitude from class to class, for the creole in turn despised those lower in the social scale than himself, as they hated him; perhaps for that very reason, they clung the more loyally to the Spanish crown, obsessed as they were by their disapproval of the oppressor nearest at hand (p. 122).

In Mexico liberal attitudes did not resolve the myth of white superiority for the mestizo or Indian (Beals, 1955/1969):

> With increased numbers of European women in the New World, and particularly with the growing conflict between the colonial Creole and the Spanish-born official, legal marriage between Indian and white was prohibited....In the New World, sexual contact between European men and Indian women continued, but were now unauthorized and irregular in all cases (p. 245). Biological Inferiority was attributed to Indians and mestizos. Increasing mixture has made biological distinctions difficult and today differentiation is made primarily upon sociocultural criteria...,[and] myths of racial homogeneity and predominance of European origin have become firmly implanted (p. 257).

As a consequence, "the traditional upper class always prided itself on being white, and has always been very sensitive to the matter of color and racial characteristics" (Fitzpatrick, 1971, p. 103).

Equating "pure blood" with Spanish lineage was also common in the American Southwest before the arrival of Anglo American settlers (Moore, 1970, p. 114-5). Forbes (1968, p. 59) notes that historical records of the 1830's about California reported that "the least drop of Spanish blood" was sufficient to raise Mexicans from the rank of slaves. "Spanish", however, remains a euphemism for white since according to private adoption agencies, upper class Mexican citizens visiting South Texas commonly make requests for white Anglo children to adopt and reject Mexican American children regardless of their skin color, including offspring of intercultural unions. Strict white purity seems more essential to them than Spanish heritage.

The desire to conform to the Iberian ideal, sometimes referred to as the "Spanish Myth" (Forbes, 1968), is reflected in the use of racial characteristics as the standard for attractiveness and social status (Longres, 1974). Light eyes, fair skin, blond and straight hair and straight and sharp nose are marks of beauty, and together, are directly and phenotypically associated with whiteness. Even a casual look at Spanish language soap operas, the novelas, a rich source of fantasy, reveals fair-skinned actors with blondes often playing the central role of the suffering heroine; the more glamorous parts in television commercials are limited to blonde, European-looking models, while those with dark features, who reflect nine out of ten Mexicans, are relegated to subservient roles (Walsh, 1987).

These lingering attitudes and their social consequences should not come as a surprise when one considers them as vestiges of white, Spanish and Portuguese colonization and the cultural, economic, and physical subjugation of native Indians and African slaves in much of Latin America. Nevertheless, a chorus of social scientists point out that the sharp demarcation of Negroid and Caucasoid

into Black or white, essential for racial classification in the United States, is absent in contemporary Latin America (Harris, 1964). Rather, a continuum of darker to lighter skin is seen as a more relevant indication of attractiveness and social status. We shall examine this proposition further.

Skin Color and Social Class Norms

The socially prominent in Latin America are generally white, but, as one author states about Puerto Rico (Longres, 1974, p. 70), "a caste system which limits the aspirations among darker-skinned people does not exist on the island" as it does to the North. This is analogous to the idea that while blondes are more likely to become Miss America, brunettes can make it also. We quote further: "And, if they get to the top, an interesting phenomenon takes place: they become socially designated as white, acceptable in every way" (Ibid, p. 70) [Emphasis added]. Thus, becoming lighter is seen as a matter of achieving economic success or higher educational status and, equally interesting, extremely low economic and educational status renders light-skinned Latinos darker to their friends, relatives, and associates than they really are.

Nevertheless, getting to the top and winning the social status of becoming "white, acceptable in every way" may be rarer than supposed. Seda Bonilla (1961) found racial identity as a barrier to achieving high status: "Of those classified by interviewers as non-white, none identified themselves as members of the upper class, while the majority identified themselves with the lower class"; most would find themselves out of place at a dance where the majority was white; and 100% of the upper class opposed marriage of a white daughter to a non-white (p. 142-3).

Harris (1964) states that there is no distinct socially significant racial group in Brazil, but rather the development of ambiguous racial identities. These identities are evident in the enormous social underclass whose life

chances varied little within it regardless of coloration, and who had little need to compete with each other. In Puerto Rico, 80% of the population was lower class and 85% of the persons of color were mixed according to one study, and they were seen as non-competitively isolated from the dominant social group (Rogler, 1946, p. 79-80). The blurring of race into a social class issue is often cited in Latin America (Harris, 1964), but social class did not replace race as the source of discrimination. That skin coloration marks a person's somewhat vague position in society may have softened but not eliminated race prejudice.

Tumin and Feldman's (1961/1969) important study of Puerto Rican perceptions of the objective consequences of color and their subjective attitudes toward it on the island reveal interesting and uneven patterns. Over 75% denied that skin color had any effect on educational and economic opportunities, and even more (about 85%) felt that they were accorded the same respect without reference to their skin color. Nevertheless, regardless of social class,

> The population is split between judgments that it is better to be White and that color doesn't matter. Roughly one half of the people in each group [white, intermediate, and Black] express a preference for White color; roughly 40 percent insist that all colors are equal; some, but only a very few, say that Mulatto is best; and almost no one thinks it is best to be Negro (p. 207).
>
> The Whites substantially outdistance all others in saying that White is the best color. The Negroes and the Mulattoes have significantly more people than Whites who claim that all colors are equal....Such sensitivity as there is to color is found more among the lighter

than the darker people. When the latter deny the relevance of color more than the lighter-skinned people, they may be insisting on their right to equal treatment, and expressing their sentiment that in Puerto Rico this right is built into the structure of society (p. 208).

But being Negro or White does matter, apparently, when dealing with status-conscious members of the middle and upper classes, and when personal and intimate relations are at stake. One can then say that on the main avenues of Puerto Rican life little attention is paid to skin color. But attention is heightened to critical awareness at the fringes and interstices of personal relations, where public policy is not an issue, and where public controls are not available (p. 202).

The wide coloration among Puerto Ricans results in there being no word in the language to designate non-white people as a phenotype, according to Longres (1972, p. 69), although triqueño(a), derived from the color of wheat, moreno(a), swarthy complexion, and mulato(a), offspring of a Black and white union, are often used to describe members of the intermediate group. Reference to the Black person as el negro(a) or de color is replete in the language as, for example, El Negro used as the title of an article by Colomban Rosario and Carrion (1945) on race prejudice. Racial terms and derogatory references in folklore and in common usage are widespread (Gordon, 1949 and 1950; Sereno, 1946). Blacks in Puerto Rican literature were traditionally represented by stereotypes in secondary and tertiary roles (Rodriguez de Laguna, 1987, p. 53-4). Parallel references to dark Puerto Ricans' feelings of inferiority are equally embedded in the culture, to include the popular song Angelitos Negros, by M.A. Maciste, a plea for identity by having black angels included among their exclusively white portrayals in church.

The term negro(a) or negrito(a) is used often as a term of endearment between white persons, but the frequent accompanying connotation among adults of sensuality implies the common stereotypic attribute of primitiveness in slaves (Rodriguez de Laguna, 1987, p. 55-6). Further, trigueña, a dark woman with white features, is considered beautiful and the object of much attention (Fitzpatrick, 1971). Her retention of Caucasoid features maintains the ideal as well as reflects the result of history's quasi-illicit African and European unions. The undercurrents of irresistible women slaves "enticing" white colonists may very well linger in selecting contemporary terms of endearment.

Separate terms are used to describe different combinations of skin tone, hair texture, and facial features. Most of these terms, however, refer to the darkness of the skin and the presence of Negroid features. In Brazil, forty racial types can be identified by the community, with the greatest agreement occurring over who looks white (Harris, 1964, p. 58). Thus, within the color continuum, Negroid features remain benchmarks to avoid by marrying lighter, white appearance is clearly noted as the ideal, and in-between are focal points for anxiety.

The absence of "passing" as white as in the United States, or of "playing white" by mixed coloreds as in South Africa, would support a colorblind proposition, since such behaviors only occur when subterfuge is necessary to overcome racial barriers in a society. Two points address this claim. One is that the notion of passing is well known and occurs frequently in Brazil and in Mexico (Harris, 1964, p. 39 and 59; Royce, 1982, p. 208), and in Puerto Rico at an increasing rate (Rogler, 1948, p. 80). Second, passing is a subversive activity. Knowledge of who is passing is, by its nature, known primarily by the person who is engaged in the activity, and this has not been studied systematically in regard to assimilation into the white upper class (Harris, 1964, p. 39-40). In this connection, demographers from the United States

discovered in 1950 that as many as 80% of the island residents classified themselves as white (Betances, 1972, p. 46). Perhaps this reflects an awareness of North American racial norms and their connotations, but it may have also indicated the personal preferences of the Puerto Ricans.

Ethnoracial Ambiguity: Cryptomelanism, Revisited

There is ample evidence that race and color discrimination are embedded in the social structure that gives values their form and power, and in the culture where the belief in the inherent superiority of whites has been encoded into the Spanish Myth. The mechanism that propels the Myth is cryptomelanism.

Cryptomelanism is the "constant effort to hide the existence of a color problem within the self" because of the fear that one is not perfectly white (Sereno, 1946, p. 265). It is an awkward term, but a useful concept that results in behaviors prevalent in North as well as in Latin America: the white persons' efforts to live with the contradiction involved in dealing in bad faith with themselves as they discriminate but deny their prejudices. In Latin America, the consequences were serious for the identity formation of <u>trigueños</u> and mestizos as well as for <u>Negros</u> and <u>Indios.</u>

The psychosocial dynamics detailed herein are based primarily on the Puerto Rican experience because more has been written about it, but they may apply with modification to other Hispanic groups as well as to certain forms of accommodation between Black and white North Americans.

Of fundamental importance in understanding the dynamics of cryptomelanism among the white Latinos is that from the beginning being born in the Americas was considered socially beneath the European Spaniard. The likelihood of their having the blood of African slaves or of the lowly Indians was evident in view of predisposing demographic, economic, and ideological factors discussed earlier that favored the birth of biracial children in the colonies. In this connection,

we note that in the past there was official concern in Mexico with the "problem" of distinguishing between those who were Spanish-born from those who were American-born, as well as with identifying whites, Indians, and Africans (Beltran, 1946, as reported by Harris, 1946, p. 106, fn 32).

Veneration of things Spanish and their extension into the social fabric continued as major municipalities in Puerto Rico had clubs called Circulo Español or Casa de España from which non-whites were excluded (Sereno, 1946, p. 262). The upper class's traditional sentiment of being and belonging to "the best" created attitudes toward non-whites in Puerto Rico that excluded them from casino life, a source of primary group association, and from the top levels of secular government, the seats of power and prestige (Rogler, 1948).

The presence of Anglo Americans on the island since the turn of the century and early Puerto Rican experience in the U.S. Armed Forces, however, served to arouse all the doubts they had about their own color as they witnessed overt discrimination against darker countrymen. Sereno's (1946) experience with returning World War II veterans sadly indicated the deep-seated source of racial quandary among many white Puerto Ricans: "they sought all possible means of reassuring themselves" of their color by returning to familiar social patterns at home (p. 266).

The upper class community's solution to the basic contradictions was to create as much social distance as possible from anyone who could associate color with it. Since "most of the all-white members of the all-white voluntary associations share the inner fear of colored ancestry" (Sereno, 1946, p. 266), cryptomelanism served to select and recruit members from the lower middle class and to bind them into the white Puerto Rican society. Even being considered Indio was preferred to having "a stripe" (black strain), since others would not come to the aspiring member's defense without having questions raised about their own ancestry and legitimate membership in the white society.

Consequently, for the intermediate groups the need for constant reassurance of their "whiteness" by others drove the common need for consensual validation into a desperate dependency on the opinions of white Puerto Ricans for confirmation of their identity.

> The many intermediate groups may never know exactly what they are because their identification as white, trigueno, or colored will depend much more on the observer's judgment than on the characteristics of race or color which they themselves possess (Fitzpatrick, 1971, p. 10).

The resulting level of anxiety that bordered on panic when they became uncertain about their color was clearly evident in strained interpersonal relations (Fitzpatrick, 1971, p. 106; Longres, 1974, p. 71), and indicated that they were "the group most violently affected by crytomelanism" (Sereno, 1946, p. 268). Behaviors associated with their ethnoracial marginality may appear similar to the description of mestizos in Guatemala described by Gillen (1952) and reported in Ramirez (1983, p. 34-5): wide mood swings, insecurity, uncertainty about their effectiveness outside their community, hesitancy about interacting in the larger world, feelings of frustration and inadequacy, aggressiveness toward themselves and members of the other caste, and psychogenic and psychosomatic complaints.

With social ascent also came commitment to the Spanish Myth. In Puerto Rico the new members of the middle class were "not only newly rich but newly-white" (Sereno, 1946, p. 268) and they were historically identified as the center of anti-Black hostility. By over-conforming to in-group attitudes they gave proof that they belong. Such attitudes are in keeping with new converts and true believers, but they introduce additional complications.

If a Puerto Rican does "not wish to aggress against Negro elements in his own family, he either hides them in the kitchen or says that he is not prejudiced" (Gordon, 1950, p. 390). The custom of having "kitchen relatives" is revealed pointedly in Black patois in a poem by Fortunato Vizcarrondo titled, "Y tu Auela, e'onne ejta?" ("And your grandmother, where is she?"), which deals with a Black man's wrath when he observes a mulatto passing as white as he hides his Black grandmother in the kitchen (Sereno, 1946, p. 265). To condemn whites, however, was to condemn members of one's own family and part of one's self. The resulting insecurities reverberated among siblings, parents, and relatives in the family that equated prestige with color. The psychological consequences could be extreme. Gordon (1950), for example, suggested that the high suicide rate among islanders in 1942 (25.4 per 100,000), that was twice that of the United States and among the highest in the world, may have been partially due to such insecurities.

Sereno (1946, p. 268) suggested that the Puerto Rican's "obsession" with dignidad, and to which one could add respeto and machismo, which stresses fierce pride in egalitarianism among men and an immediate response to perceived insult, derives its motivational force from the fear of being discriminated against because of color, which the "ego finds plausible and hence acceptable" as a reality. If borne out by clinical and empirical evidence, it would further indicate the Myth's power to influence fundamental values in the culture.

By contrast, lower class (and darker) Puerto Ricans tended to be excluded from the entrapment and to have suffered somewhat less from the accompanying delusions: Sereno (1946) felt that the best adjusted veterans were Black, and Seda Bonilla (1961) found that the most self-accepting Puerto Ricans in New York were also among the Black group. Only they seemed to see the reality of their lives and the duplicity of the other Puerto Ricans. They are versed in exposing the charade with comments such as, "Si no tiene Dinga, tiene Mandinga," a

reference to two groups of African slaves, Dingos and Mandingos, who wore white stripes on right or left cheeks, respectively, to identify their affiliation; hence, "If you don't have a stripe on one side, it's on the other" (Gordon, 1950, p. 382; Sereno, 1946, p. 263).

Despite the impact of cryptomelanism, white Puerto Ricans point to wide and comfortable informal social relations between races, interracial unions and marriages, and wide coloration of the population as evidence of the absence of racism. Nevertheless, by coveting racial purity they limit their part in the development of these "humane forms" of social interaction (Gordon, 1950, p. 386).

Latinos' State of Mind During Transition

Most Puerto Rican newcomers to the United States are drawn from the lower social strata with the intent of improving their socioeconomic conditions (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1976). These strata represent the largest segment of the population where mobility within it was not severely restricted by skin color. Both they and the better-off profess that their shared culture is the source of personal and social identity. At the core, however, is the acceptance of whiteness as a measure of attractiveness and of ultimate social status. These attitudes and beliefs constitute culture accommodations to the inherent contradiction in Latin American societies.

The Latinos' conscious identity, therefore, is derived from their culture and supersedes the racial identity that their skin color reflected and their social class represented. Their ethnoracial identity remains uncertain. Still, coloration is accepted as a fact of life within the family when Latinos embark to the United States to improve their economic lot or for some to escape political turbulence. But they are often accompanied by reminders of the social arrangements they left behind, for others, fewer in numbers, also come as former

members of the white upper middle class, and among them are those who fled in the wake of social revolutions. Many of these expatriates tend to equate skin color with social status and, to the extent that they interact with other Latinos, represent reminders of the Spanish Myth. Both, however, silently agree to retain culture as the only source of their identity even though infrequent social intercourse between them is often strained and their marriage to each other is rare. We do not know the extent to which the dynamics of cryptomelanism are replayed in the United States.

Therefore, it is an oversimplification to contend that the difference between Hispanic individuals is due only to social class and that most enter the United States to be confronted with race prejudice for the first time. Nevertheless, many hope to find economic opportunities in an open class society where they believe culture, relatively homogeneous at home, and coloration, an accepted phenomenon, are not severe obstacles to success and survival. Along with the cultural discontinuity, familiar to students of acculturation, they are rudely confronted with their own accommodation to their ethnoracial uncertainty with untoward consequences.

PART III

COPING WITH SKIN COLOR IN THE UNITED STATES

The Puerto Rican Experience

Upon arrival on the continent, with the notion that "one drop of negro blood" classifies one as Black, darker-skinned migrants from Puerto Rico are slapped with the impact of a virulent form of bigotry not evident on the island. By virulent, we mean the intense polarization of North American attitudes toward racial issues as they are reported in personal experiences, recited in anecdotes recounted by friends and relatives, and displayed consistently in the media (Betances, 1987).

At home history had negotiated a silent solution to the race-class contradictions; but from a spectrum of color they confront a color dichotomy, from cultural acceptance they now feel culturally irrelevant.

> Being forced into a definition of self as white or black has consequences for self-worth and poses a severe threat to the ethnic identification as a Puerto Rican. Ethnicity encompasses conscious and unconscious processes, fulfilling a deep psychological need for security, identity, and a sense of historical continuity. A self-identification based on color consideration is particularly destructive in that not all members of the family or of this ethnic community are the same color. It may play havoc with the family system and can contain the seeds of divisiveness and destruction of the Puerto Rican community (Mizio, 1979, p. 9).

The dichotomous racial experience in the United States remains intricately woven with that on the island resulting in a pattern of conflict that enmeshes both. Gordon (1949, p. 295-6) observed that in order to avoid discriminatory treatment accorded Black continentals, many dark and intermediate Puerto Ricans stress behavior and preferences that exemplify their cultural lifestyle. This creates conflict between them as they compete for work and social privileges, and as their Black neighbors see in their attitudes rejection of Black Americans and of the Puerto Rican's own negritude. The emphasis on being Latino also serves to stereotype all Puerto Ricans as non-white in the eyes of both Black and white continentals.

One consequence Gordon (1949) saw was animosity between the Black migrants to the United States and white Puerto Ricans on the island, who are most "conscious of his reputation on the continent [and] is incensed at being regarded as negro. He insists that 'only the worst type of Puerto Rican emigrates to New York'" (p. 296). This reputation haunts the returning migrant to the island, especially if he or she has acculturated into the mainstream and feels further alienated (Nazario, 1986). In Puerto Rico the white islanders withdraw further from the dark population. Upon visiting the continent, they may separate from other light-skinned but stereotyped Puerto Ricans by declaring themselves ambiguously as Spanish or Latin Americans or, we might add, disappear altogether by concealing their Hispanic heritage. This last step serves to deny all traces of African lineage, which is a constant concern to them in Puerto Rico as well as in the United States.

Gordon's impressions were confirmed in large measure by Seda Bonilla (1961) in his earlier cited study of residential dispersal patterns in New York City during the early 50's. The following is a summary:

> White Puerto Ricans in white, lower class neighborhoods kept their ethnicity a secret, never spoke Spanish in

public, pretended not to understand the language, rejected black and "ignorant" Puerto Ricans, took "refuge in 'Spanish' credentials of white identity", and were blamed by their children for suffering the indignities of their ethnic origins.

A second light-skinned group identified themselves as Puerto Ricans with self-assured dignity and pride that was passed on to their children, who even in the third generation spoke Spanish well. They would be more likely than the others to live in ethnic enclaves with the belief by 46% of them (shared with the lower class group) that Americans liked Puerto Ricans. On an interpersonal level they rejected the racial dichotomy in the United States even though they did not "look Puerto Rican." Many, however,hesitated to advocate for a national unifying identity because they did "not realize the latent functions of conflicting racial identities which the impact of American culture creates among Puerto Ricans" (Ibid, p. 147).

A third group, non-white, intermediate in skin color, was in limbo. They were limited to certain jobs, restricted socially, and segregated in Black American residential areas. Not accepted by white Americans, they maintained their marginal status as a Spanish-accent, foreign-language group rather than be assimilated into the Black community. They carried the stigma of being stereotyped as "the Puerto Ricans" and only 30% of them felt that Americans liked them.

> The fourth group had the highest feeling of acceptance from Americans as 50% felt liked by them. They easily integrated into Southern Black migrant communities as black "West Indians". They had no anxiety about their Puerto Rican identity, were effortlessly bilingual, and showed a special biculturality by selecting outstanding Black Americans as heroes.

Berle's (1959) study of 80 Puerto Rican families in New York City revealed that stress and anxiety in regard to ethnicity and skin color were associated with a greater number of general health problems and a direct and strong link with drug addiction: of the 20 young addicts in these families each was the darkest member of his family. Skin color also played a role in the tortured reflections of Piri Thomas (1967) in his autobiography, Down These Mean Streets, in the community problems described by Fitzpatrick (1971, p. 112), and in the family conflicts cited by Longres (1974, p. 71-2). It is from contemporary Puerto Rican novels, plays, and poetry in the United States and on the island that we learn most about the effects of race and color (Rodriguez de Laguna, 1987, p. 37, 56; Rivera, 1987), rather than from empirical studies.

Shelibow (1973) cited two early studies that indicated that Puerto Rican children have lower self-esteem and self-concept than white children, although neither investigated the effect of within-group color difference. Her own investigation of skin color among children from the Dominican Republic, who were in the fourth to sixth grade in New York City, clearly showed that the dark Latinos had lower self-esteem than their white Hispanic cohorts.

Fitzpatrick (1971) noted that Puerto Ricans more often identify themselves in private as black, brown, and "colored" than is revealed in census reports. He reiterated that the individual with intermediate coloration will experience the greatest difficulty since his or her ethnoracial identity will continue to

be ambiguous. The rest will be forced into positive and negative categories. Small wonder, then, observed Bonilla (1971), that by the 1960 census 96% of New York Puerto Ricans more classified as white, a remarkable transformation. His penetration of the Puerto Rican's self-deception around this issue is appropriate:

> We live in a society that knows only black and white. Puerto Rican complacency and equivocation with respect to race and even our more genuine accommodations of racial differences have little place here. As we have discovered, here one is black, white, or a non-something. Still Puerto Ricans — white or black — have little comprehension of the deep racial animosities that divide mainland Americans. Many are understandably reluctant to become part of a fight that is to them ugly and meaningless. But we cannot continue to pretend to be an island of civility and racial harmony untouched by the storm of racial conflict that surrounds us. Again we must acknowledge that our culture — like all others dominated by Europeans — has taught us to experience blackness as misfortune. Our escapism and lack of realism with respect to race issues is as much grounded in such fears and self-doubts as in any affirmative principles of equality. (p. 464).

Meanwhile, with unemployment and poverty rates that are at least twice that of whites, with income levels at 40% less, along with a high school dropout rate at 65% to 80%, they are the least successful of the three major Hispanic groups (Church, 1985). Gurak (1982) and Nazario (1986) note similar differences. Among Chicanos, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans they also have the largest number of

black Latinos living in the United States, which may account for the comments that they "encounter more discrimination than other Hispanics" and "we are regarded neither as Hispanics nor as Americans. We are Puerto Ricans, outsiders" (Church, 1985, p. 38). The telling observation that more dark-skinned than light-skinned Puerto Ricans opt to return to the island suggests the different impact that prejudice on the continent has on this group (Senior, 1965, p. 46).

The Mexican American Experience

Arce (1981) suggests that the Mexican Americans' adherence to culture as the main source of their identity is based on the divisive influence that society's attitude toward skin color would have on them:

> It has been asserted ... that if Mexicans lost their cultural identity, those more light-skinned and Caucasian appearing would "become a part of our class order and be capable of rising in our social hierarchy," while those darker would probably become semi-caste and possibly merge with black and American Indian groups (p. 80).

The impact of skin color preference is particularly evident in the school setting and becomes entwined with the Hispanic culture to explain under-achievement by Latinos. In the wake of continued institutional discrimination, Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi (1986) suggested that the acceptance of the Spanish Myth by Mexican Americans "made the option of passing appealing even to those who could not pass," resulted in an ambivalent social identity, encouraged community dissension, and "prevented the emergence of truly oppositional identity" (p. 124). Emphasis was on acceptance of the status quo, acculturating to the Anglo values, and assimilation into a biracial society.

As others have noted previously, it was the returning veterans after World War II who organized anew to resist discrimination as a social policy and refused to return to the previously accepted way of life. Veteran organizations were noteworthy in their leading renewed opposition to discriminatory practices in education, employment, housing, and in the political and legal systems. Equally important, they emphasized using the ethnic community as an alternative non-Anglo reference group, incorporating "a cultural frame of reference that stresses the maintenance of a Mexican-American culture and language," and challenging orientations that were regarded as "detrimental to the integrity of their culture" (Ibid, p. 125). The next generation was involved in the Chicano Movement of the 1960's, which re-emphasized ethnic identity through the revaluation of their Mexican and Indian cultural roots, publicized discrimination through demonstrations, and resisted acculturation and assimilation that negated their identity and threatened their community's dignity and coherence. During this period important political and legal actions were also taken against discriminatory practices, especially in education.

Thus, the shift from Spanish or white identity, an accommodation to racial discrimination, to Mexican American and Chicano identifications as a cultural affirmation and resistance to assimilation, presented the community with alternative coping strategies. But they are alternatives that Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi (1986) saw as "oppositional" and as having the untoward effect for some of distrusting schools that do not prepare them to overcome the discriminatory job market and for developing a caste-like minority mentality.

They proposed that the shift in orientations accounted for their underachievement despite the evidence that there had been consistent improvement by the 1980's in school achievement by the Chicanos, although they had not kept pace with others (Burkey, 1978, p. 386-90). The within-group improvement can be attributed at least to some extent to cultural re-emphasis and to improved

educational opportunities due to legal actions against segregation and discrimination. That the improvement rates pale in comparison with Anglos attest to the persistence of institutional barriers that discouraged Mexican Americans and scapegoated their life style as the source of the problem. Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi (1986) themselves implied the source of the barriers when they stated that "those who pass [as white] must adopt attitudes and cultural frames of reference that go along with their assumed Spanish or white status," as well as competencies and behaviors "that enhance academic achievement" (p. 128) [Emphasis added]. However, passing as non-Mexican they stated "arouses the wrath of their fellow Mexican" (quoting Vigil, 1980, p. 161), and the act of "tio tomasing tends to convey the message that although education may be necessary, it is not enough" (Ibid).

We pointed out in this report that passing as white occurs in societies where subterfuge is necessary to overcome racial barriers. The fellow Mexicans, who accused the Uncle Toms of "selling out," were referring to the price that they have had to pay because of their darker skin for the differential opportunities for assimilation provided by society, and that passing as white was rejecting them and their heritage and acquiescing to an unjust system at their expense. The effect of job ceilings as educational disincentives falls unevenly hard on darker-skinned Mexican Americans. Those who do not "exhibit a caste-like mentality in behavioral response to the demands of schools" (Ibid, p. 151) and succeed, we contend, are more likely to be light-skinned rather than an unspecified sub-group as the authors contend.

There is no reason to expect that prevailing racial attitudes in society and in schools should change because the Mexican American community introduces new strategies for coping with racism. That the positive but "oppositional" cultural strategy laid the seeds for alienation from the school system lacks empirical evidence. It should also be noted that Mexican Americans had

vigorously opposed attempts at the legal segregation of their children in schools on the basis of race since the 1930's. Their emphasis on cultural rather than racial distinction is not new, nor is society's persistent attitude towards them. Rather, we expect that Mexican Americans who are more like the dominant society in physical appearance will tend to earn more and do better in school than those who are dissimilar.

Attitudes Toward Skin Color

While residential dispersion among Mexican Americans has not paralleled that of Puerto Ricans in New York City, there is some evidence that skin color also affects their residential mobility. In a study that used a spectrophotometer to calculate Native American genetic linkage with diabetes, the Mexican American population in San Antonio, Texas was found to become progressively lighter in skin color as it moved from the low-income barrios to the more affluent suburbs (Gardner, et.al, 1984). Dark skin was characteristic of 46% of barrio residents, 27% of those who lived in middle-income, transitional neighborhoods, and 18% of Mexican Americans living in high-income census tracts. (The percent of Mexican Americans living in the latter two locations was 60% and 10%, respectively.) The combined data for the three communities indicated that 33% of Mexican Americans have dark skin.

These skin tone measurements were somewhat discrepant with the 1980 census. It reported that in San Antonio the Spanish origin population, 93% of whom were Mexican Americans, 76% classified themselves as white and 24% chose "other." Our recent analysis of the data on phenotypes from the National Chicano Survey conducted by the University of Michigan at about the same time as the census revealed that 26% of 926 subjects were judged to be light European in appearance, 45% intermediate, and 29% dark Indian. By comparing the results from objective measurements, mainly self-reported census data, and observers'

judgments, the percent of dark Mexican Americans tends to be consistent (33%, 24%, and 29%) and they tend to see themselves as "other" rather than as white or Indian.

Latinos differ in their self-perceptions. The census data for the New York-New Jersey SMSA, where 60% were Puerto Ricans, are in sharp contrast with San Antonio: 46% chose white, fully 48% selected "other", and 6% identified as Black. More than twice as many (54%), therefore, reported or were classified as non-white as compared to the 24% of Mexican Americans.

Nevertheless, the psychological effect of skin color prejudice is similar. Cota-Robles de Suarez (1971) studied the perceptions of skin color among twenty-eight five-year-old Chicano boys and girls in two Head Start programs in Los Angeles. She found that while the children were aware of their skin color, 70% did not show a preference for the color brown in coloring human figures and "overwhelmingly chose bizarre colors as skin color preferences." Light-skinned blond and brown-haired children were consistently preferred as friends and as playmates to invite home over brown-skinned peers.

> In conjunction with race awareness and race identification, the children may possess awareness and acceptance of the dominant society's existing cultural attitudes and values attached to race. Also, by the age of five, the child appears to be aware that to be dark in U.S. society is to be inferior.
>
> When the child rejects the dark color, he knows that he must be identified with that which he rejects and therefore is in conflict (Ibid, p. 138).

Furthermore, the author proposed that

> If school success is related to a healthy self-concept and the school has systematically depreciated the worth

> of dark skin, the school itself could account for the Chicano's increasing apathy towards school as he grows older (Ibid).

Attitude toward skin color was studied among Chicano adolescents who were attending two schools in New Mexico with high ethnic density. It found that conflict about self-perception "increased as skin color was perceived darker" (Maldonado and Cross, 1977, p. 149). Also the Hispanic girls were less self-accepting and were more self-conscious and critical of their appearance than boys. There was a tendency by the researchers, however, to minimize the significance of these results in their effort to "refute" a stereotype about Mexican Americans by indicating that low socioeconomic level was not associated with a sense of inferiority, worthlessness, or self-hatred. They revealed the hidden and confounding influence of skin color on studies of ethnic identity: "The study results are perplexing in that they both uphold and refute results of other studies of Mexican American self-perceptions" (p. 149). Why "the study results are perplexing" is unclear since their conclusion could be that the results of other studies should be re-evaluated in terms of the powerful influence of skin color on self-perception and self-acceptance.

There are ample anecdotes with racial symbols and undertones: as with Black families (Fuller and Geis, 1985), Hispanic parents not only count the fingers and toes of a newborn, but note carefully the color of the skin and the color and texture of the hair; suntan is avoided and bleaching cream is used to whiten the complexion (Berne, 1959/1983); and some women will only marry Anglos so that their children will be lighter, while others refuse to do so in case they are blamed for their dark offspring (Forbes, 1968).

In Coles' (1977) study of Chicano children in South Texas, ten-year-old Carmen talked about her and her twelve-year-old brother's looks:

> He is anxious to leave Texas for a northern city, the larger the better...[because] he believes that in far off cities there is a different America: "He thinks it is better to leave and try to find a place where people are so busy they don't worry what you look like."
>
> Carmen tells her mother upon occasion that she can't help it, she isn't as proud of her appearance as she'd like to be. She half wonders whether there isn't a way for her to look different.... Then she refers to those arbiters of all taste, the Anglos: "If you look like an Anglo, you'll be treated better by the teachers. There is one girl, her father is Anglo, and her mother one of us; she's light, and in school we keep hearing how smart she is and how she has the best manners of anyone. Then some kids want to beat her up later, after school."...She senses the envy, the rivalry generated in herself and others. She became sad rather than angry or resentful (p. 246-7).

Later, during the same interview with Carmen and after her talking about women joining men to protest Anglo discrimination, Coles notes the depth of the child's feelings: "She smiles, claps her hands, pretends to be in possession of a gun: bang, bang, about ten times - and a few dead Anglos" (p. 248).

The bitter conclusion that stunted a bright, thirteen-year-old girl's aspirations is revealed in her theme for an English class assignment in the eighth grade:

> To begin with, I am a Mexican. That sentence has a scent of bitterness as it is written. I feel that if it weren't for my nationality I would accomplish more. My

being Mexican has brought about my lack of initiative. No matter what I attempt to do, my dark skin always makes me feel that I will fail (Cota-Robles de Suarez, 1971, p. 121).

These studies also suggest that from early childhood Latinas and other minority women are faced with a double indignity: sexism and racism (Sanford and Donovan, 1985, p. 369-75). Even when "being beautiful" remains one of the few areas where women have been allowed to excel, the Miss America image confines the standard to one which most of them find impossible to meet and which is embarrassingly reinforced by the advertising, entertainment, and news media. Hispanic females are particularly vulnerable to internalizing the cultural values that equate attractiveness with Caucasian features and beauty with worthiness and self-esteem.

But boys, like Carmen's brother, are also affected. Most striking was Rodriguez's (1981) account of feeling trapped in his dark skin:

> I was to grow up an ugly child or one who thought himself ugly (feo). One night when I was eleven or twelve years old, I locked myself in the bathroom over the sink. Without any pleasure I studied my skin. I turned on the faucet. (In my mind I heard the swirling voices of aunts, and even my mother's voice, whispering, whispering incessantly about lemon juice solutions and dark, feo children.) With a bar of soap, I fashioned a thick ball of lather. I began soaping my arms. I took my father's straight razor out of the medicine cabinet. Slowly, with steady deliberateness, I put the blade against my flesh, pressed it as close as I could without cutting, and moved it up and down across my skin to see

> if I could get out, somehow lessen, the dark. All I succeeded in doing, however, was in shaving my arms bare of their hair. For as I noted with disappointment, the dark would not come out. It remained. Trapped. Deep in the cells of my skin (p. 124-5).

What about light-skinned Mexican Americans? Do they escape? The sense of potential ostracism and rejection is also felt by those who have learned to deny and omit the existence of mixed ancestry, which is done at great psychic cost and family disruption. They are often "exposed to disparaging remarks about members of their own ethnic groups," while at the same time they are offered opportunities for "insider's socialization" not available to their darker siblings and friends (de Anda, 1984, p. 106).

Consider the following true incidents from our experience:

> A young man, a successful engineer, light in eyes, hair, and skin, emotionally splits apart as he recounts his childhood experience when he was ostracized and taunted by his ethnic peers for looking "too gringo", and later at another school was tied to a tree while his Anglo classmates danced around him shouting "We captured Pancho Villa! We captured Pancho Villa!"
>
> A young teenager cried because she felt that her chances to be on the Pep Squad had diminished because she overheard her Hispanic classmate say that she was not light enough to be Anglo nor dark enough to make the squad as a Latina.
>
> A young woman recounts with resentment how her "jealous" darker-skinned siblings "accused" her of being adopted because she had light skin and was popular.

Berne's (1959/1983) speculations into the influence of ancient mythology surrounding dark and light skin on western cultures and the impact of family folkore on personality development was prompted by a depressed, "Spanish-American" patient living in a semi-rural community in California. The following excerpt reflects the patient's ambiguous identity:

> Both her mother and her grandmother made it clear to her how much they were disgusted by her dark skin, and explanied to her that light-skinned people like her father were superior to all of them. They forbade her ever to expose herself to the sun, and her grandmother used to try various preparations in an attempt to bleach the little girl's skin. Interestingly enough, although Charilita had black hair and dark eyes, her skin was actually not outstandingly olive; it was no darker than that of her three children, whom she was very proud of, because if her grandmother were still alive to see them she would know that Charilita had "white blood" (p. 264).

The psychological consequences of phenotyping are similar to those that DeVos (1978) attributed to minority acculturation. To both light and dark Latinos the spectre of race is an unwelcome reality that brings "shame over what is disavowed."

> No child survives a situation of cultural pluralism without taking in some experiences that cannot be consciously accommodated as consistent with one's self-image.... Over and over we find there is conflict between one's consciously embraced identity and what has been experienced but denied and repressed. Some of

> these repressed experiences remain alive and potentially disruptive, though buried deep in the individual's unconscious. It takes energy to repress - energy that could be used for more constructive forms of self-development (Ibid, p. 23).

These incidents among dark and light-skinned children indicate that skin coloration is an issue for the Mexican American's ethnic identity, acculturation, family relationships, and well-being, and that remnants of their early encounters with color are still part of their lives. Skin color remains a concern to Mexican Americans when control of immigration through identity cards, employer sanctions, and deportation become political issues.

Latinos' Sensitivity to Skin Color

In today's society, Latinos are less frequently confronted directly with rejection on the basis of their skin color than in the past. Civil Rights legislation has taught people not to be obvious or blatant in expressing their prejudices. If individuals were directly confronted, it would be easier to attribute the insult to their integrity to the offending person and to justify their response. More often it is under conditions of uncertainty that the incidents of rejection occur and it is difficult for Latinos to attribute their reactions to external factors and to see them in their proper social context.

As a consequence, individuals are left feeling in doubt, ambivalent, and alone, wondering if they are just carrying a chip on their shoulders. Most of the time these feelings, these thoughts, these questions occur in a flash, with the persons hardly being aware of them before they shrug and go on with their lives. But what residue of feelings are they left with? Anger and indignation? The relevance of these questions pertains to the potentially harmful physical consequences of suppressed hostility as revealed in studies of high blood pressure in Black males (Harburg, et. al, 1973).

The extent that the public is unaware of the Latinos' sensitivity to the issue of color is the extent to which such incidents will occur. That these incidents occur more frequently than we think was revealed in a recent incident from our experience:

> A nationally syndicated soap opera company conducted a casting call in San Antonio for "Mexican looking extras" for scenes that were supposed to take place in Mexico. Most of the people who wanted to be on television and answered the call, however, were asked to return later after they had darkened their faces because they "did not look Mexican enough." The producers wanted color, not coloration. This group included, by the way, the then-reigning Miss San Antonio, a role model. The initial reaction by the extras was to laugh at the California casting company's ignorance of what Mexicans looked like. But laughter soon turned to anger and indignation as the incident was talked about and as the full implication began to dawn upon them: that Mexicans were to be type-cast in accordance with the public's distorted perceptions of their skin color.

Aside from the lack of awareness on the part of the employers, which suggests that such incidents occur frequently, and aside from the existence of intense latent sentiment about skin color on the part of the extras, which suggests that it is not a trivial matter, the incident was also instructive about the importance of collective action in overcoming prejudice. The latent hostility that may have been suppressed by an individual, was acknowledged, supported, and galvanized by the group and focused on the causal agent, the company, before it was minimized and dismissed. The incident was resolved to

the group's satisfaction by the company's acknowledging its error, relinquishing the color requirements for extras, and apologizing for offending the community. The important points were that the problem was put in its proper social context, it was externalized and removed as a burden from the individuals who were offended, and they experienced a sense of empowerment.

Why do many Americans misunderstand the Latino's sensitivity to skin color? There are probably many answers including the lack of enough meaningful contact between the communities for each to learn about the other.

Even increased contact, however, may not improve understanding of the Latino's complex attitudes and sentiments about being stigmatized as non-white. Forbes (1968) concluded that "a 'curtain of silence' has been draped around the question of racial characteristics of Mexican-Americans and how these characteristics might influence relations with Anglo-Americans" (p. 55). It served to deny any non-Caucasian ancestry and to evade, at least to some extent by light-skinned Chicanos, the discriminatory practices aimed at colored minorities, namely Indians, Blacks, and, in the western United States, Asian and Filipino immigrants. In fact, it was their successful effort to disclaim racialclassification in California and Texas that prevented communities from legally segregating their school children. In the process, however, it has also served to hide the legitimacy of the problem from Anglos and other minorities. Americans who confess ignorance of the ethnoracial composition of the Hispanic community (de Junco, 1986) may acquiesce to the more sensitive Latinos who deny mixed racial heritage and thereby aid and abet the Spanish Myth (Forbes, 1968, p. 56-7) and the dynamics of cryptomelanism.

Another answer was revealed in a study of white, Mexican Americans, and Black pre-adolescents attending an integrated school in Los Angeles (Hurstfield, 1978). The white children placed overwhelming importance on their body image, as one might expect young children to do. They also gave strong, positive value

to their physical appearance and made frequent reference to their body in answer to the question "Who Am I?". Interestingly, very few made reference to their race or skin color. Similar results were obtained with white college students (Axelcon, 1985, p. 369). Hurstfield stated the following as to the implications of her results:

> Their preoccupation with their physical attributes indicates the extent to which physical appearance is a central criterion for evaluating people in the dominant culture, and can also be seen as a manifestation of the White group's self-confidence. For, as the dominant racial group in American society, their appearance conforms to prevailing images of what ideal socially acceptable bodies should look like (Ibid, p. 67).

The social implications are that many Anglo Americans may not be aware of their prejudgments, tend to see society and evaluate its problems in non-racial terms, and have their point of view supported by Latinos who deny the color issue and thereby keep Anglos oblivious to their sensitivity.

Interestingly, it was the few children who said that being white was a part of their self-concept who gave less positive statements about themselves. They were conscious of the race issue and used it to bolster their egos.

The white standard was not lost on those minority children in the study whose appearance may deviate from the social ideal and whose peer acceptance and subsequent self-acceptance are influenced by it. Not only did Mexican American children make fewer positive references to their physical appearance as important aspects of their identity, but, by contrast to their white cohorts, those who omitted ethnic identifications made more negative references and fewer positive ones about their bodies than those who identified their ethnicity. The author concluded that non-involvement with their bodies may stem from their

failure to come to terms with their ethnoracial identity, and that recognition of one's racial identity may be a precondition for accepting one's body and one's self. To these pre-adolescents, then, body image and ethnicity are closely linked to personal identity.

Forbes (1968) stated the purpose of this report in terms of its significance for the Mexican American people:

> The racial heritage of the Mexican is significant and should not be overlooked by the scholar. Needless to state it cannot be overlooked by the Mexican-American whose visibility brings him into his problem (p. 58) [Emphasis in original].
>
> The future of the Mexican in the United States, in brief, can never be satisfactory until the problem of race is solved, for feelings of color prejudice and color inferiority are still very much alive (p. 66).

PART IV

DISCUSSION

Implications for Research

Since little attention has been given to phenotype as a factor in the Latino's life-choices, a host of general questions are suggested for research by this review of the problem. It seems clear that the significant number of Latinos choosing "other" as a racial category in the 1980 census indicates a need for greater precision in measurement and classification. It is unclear whether the choice indicated a rejection of racial categories based on a preferred cultural identity or a growing acceptance of an intermediate racial identifier not available on the census form. Nevertheless, fewer Latinos saw themselves as white than previous census reports suggested, which argues for a decrease in the group's assimilationist orientation. The irrelevance in the public's mind of ethnoracial identities is revealed in the Census Bureau's Supplementary Report, Persons of Spanish Origin in the United States: 1982, where racial characteristics of Hispanic populations that were available to some extend in census tract data went unreported in this summary report. Improved rigor in census surveys and reports would allow for analysis of the influence of phenotypes on a variety of socioeconomic variables.

Are there differences between the avowed and actual conditions for the assimilation of Latinos in the United States? Are Latinos categorically cast as ethnoracial groups where assimilation is denied to them as a class, or is there evidence that Latinos are differentially assimilated according to phenotype? There is a need to analyze the process of assimilation, as it was defined herein, in order to discover whether in fact remaining outside the dominant society's intimate circles of power and influence diminishes one's efforts to acculturate; and whether these efforts are related to the dark Latino's problems and the light Latino's predicted achievement in school and in the economy.

What are the Latino's perceptions of the opportunities for social assimilation? There is a need to compare Mexican American and Puerto Rican men and women's perceptions of where they see themselves on the color continuum and how they feel about it with their perception of the dominant society's valuation of their skin color difference. How do these perceptions vary according to age, gender, education, income levels, and acculturation, and according to the ethnic density of their residential, school, and work environments? Do they affect family relationships and marriage opportunities? Are they associated with the presence of psychiatric symptoms, suicide, substance abuse, and ill-health, to name but a few consequences?

The interplay of personal factors with social influences would be of concern, not the least of which is the relative salience of culture and phenotype for the individual's ethnoracial identity. We do not know when individuals' phenotype is sufficiently dissimilar to become an affective symbol of ethnoracial identity, nor how life-choices are constrained by stereotyping Latinos on this basis. We also do not know when their phenotype is sufficiently similar to facilitate their passing as Anglo, nor what are the social limits and psychological consequences of switching identities. Also, the consequences for the individuals of the complex interaction between their perception of their skin color and the observers' assessment need to be investigated. Reliable assessment techniques need to be developed. Lastly, we need to consider the implications of ethnoracial ambiguity in the psychosocial treatment of Latinos and their families.

Before these steps are taken the Hispanic community may have to tap into those not-so-trivial incidents to learn how they have influenced the lives of its members so that we can begin to appreciate the scope and dimensions of the problem. In the process, we might initiate a form of community ethnoracial re-awakening.

We are not the least bit confident that these studies would be undertaken soon for calls to action have been made before with little apparent success. Why such research has not been undertaken before is an intriguing question and open to speculation. Scholars, Latinos and Anglos alike, are not immune to denying skin color as an issue. Among researchers skin color may be considered an inappropriate variable in measures of acculturation and ethnic identity where culture, language, and ethnic group orientations are of primary concern. Another explanation is that there is a keen awareness on the part of researchers of the painful sensitivity and denial of skin color as issues in the Hispanic community. As such, they may be concerned about offending the respondents and affecting the validity of questionnaires that include questions and scale items about attitudes toward skin color. Such inquiries may be regarded as best left to observation and to interview schedules administered in person.

These conceptual and pragmatic considerations, however accurate, fail to explain the source of the community's lack of concerted attention to this sensitive issue.

Implications for a Theory of Ethnoracial Ambiguity

As previously suggested, the community whispers its fear that society's skin color prejudice will split families and divide the community forever because of its impact on its members. Seda Bonilla's (1961) study of residential typologies in New York City provides considerable evidence that this had taken place among Puerto Ricans. They split along and within color lines. Arce (1981) noted similar concerns for this possibility among Mexican Americans.

The fear seems to be intimately woven into the dynamics of acculturation as the first and necessary step toward winning the avowed promise of assimilation, sharing the advantages and rewards accorded the accepted members of society. But for a few exceptions, dark Latinos are seldom represented in the media, in public life, in noteworthy professions, and on the society page. On a

fundamental interpersonal level Latinos know that acceptance as a marriage partner is a key criterion for total assimilation, and that one's acceptability in the United States is strongly influenced by racial attitudes even more than it was in Latin America. Consequently, only members of the Hispanic family who are physically similar to the dominant group members are known to be accepted as candidates for assimilation, while those who are dissimilar are not.

Assimilation, therefore, remains a threat to the integrity of the Hispanic family and community, and acculturation is seen as the initial path to their demise. In the process, the painful race issue becomes suppressed. The constant pull towards complete acculturation is modified and weakened by the group's renewed and proper interest in retaining cultural heritage and language and ethnic networks and loyalty. Culture and ethnicity thus become the central forces in maintaining community cohesiveness and preventing family disruption from the outside; they also serve to bind light and dark Latinos to each other and, consequently, to the discrimination experienced by the entire group.

As a key difference from other minority groups, the wide coloration of Latinos and their individual achievements enables some to embrace the promise of assimilation, the worth of acculturating, and the denial of a skin-color barrier. As candidates for assimilation, light, European-looking Latinos who retain ethnic ties are subject to much attention and burden as symbolic and token representatives of their culture. They are expected to behave in accordance with the stereotype of their group while they are also seen as exceptional and "a credit to their people." Royce (1982) discusses the contradictory pressures experienced by tokens to overachieve or underachieve, to ridicule one's group or oneself, and to inhibit self-expression or endure social isolation (p. 189-200). The constant decisions are to keep, shed, or disguise one's ethnic identity. The temptation to manipulate one's ethnicity can create an intense moral dilemma.

The light-skinned Latinos' gain in comparison to others can only be justified on the basis of individual effort even as they protest the absence of cultural pluralism and the loss of their language, culture, and heritage. The sons and daughters of white immigrants are familiar with the rhetoric and readily acknowledge the loss as the price of assimilation into American life: "we did it, so can you." Many Latinos grudgingly and ambivalently accept the assimilationist's argument, but since the underlying difference is racial masked as cultural, this last proposition is but half true.

This is done at the expense of its darker members, who, if they protested their limited economic opportunities, would undermine the achievement of their lighter- skinned siblings. Instead, they accept that their limited assimilation is due to their lack of acculturation and they attempt to bury their skin color along with their aspirations deeper into themselves. Even their awareness that their physical difference is devalued is psychologically accepted as a personal shortcoming and is not readily attributed to social attitudes and to unfair institutional standards. Like ten-year-old Carmen they seethe but become "sad rather than angry or resentful."

By failing to retain the justification that the positive, integrative cultural strategy was undertaken in large measure to prevent racial dissension within the Hispanic community, Latinos remain vulnerable to being blamed for their inability to acculturate as a group and they relieve the dominant society of its role and responsibility for creating divisiveness. Furthermore, society's compelling need to deny its role in creating conflict by believing that skin color is not a problem for Latinos in the United States and the Hispanic community's support of this belief, serve to impede intellectual, political, and organizational collaboration among Latinos and between them and other minorities to fight the vestiges of discrimination in American society.

Increasing Options in Life-Style Pursuits

Before the results of massive research efforts become available to the Hispanic community, models of alternative options in life-style pursuits can be learned from the experience of other ethnoracial minorities. We noted in the beginning of this report that charter membership in the subordinate class as a result of military conquest had different social consequences than the ascribed status that resulted from voluntary immigration by minority groups. Cross-cultural comparisons of the relative progress in this and other countries indicates that most immigrants do considerably better in school and in the economy than the indigenous ethnoracial minorities. A better understanding of the reasons for this difference and its underlying dynamics could prove useful for improving the Latinos' life-chances. Also, comparison of experiences in dealing with skin color preference and prejudice among indigenous minorities in the United States could be instructive. The Latinos' struggle with self-acceptance and the preparation of their children to live in a biracial society could be improved by increased communication with members of the Black community, whose experience with race prejudice has been less subject to rationalization. We will discuss these alternatives briefly as suggested avenues for future investigation and intergroup collaboration.

Immigrant groups are not tied to the historical consequences of dominant-subordinate relationships that have affected indigenous minorities in the new country and they feel freer to pursue different survival strategies. Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi (1986) noted that the indigenous racial group, the Maoris of New Zealand, did "less well in school than immigrant Polynesians who share similar language and culture" (p. 77) and phenotype; more to the point, in the United States "Mexican students appear to be more successful than Chicano students" (p. 78). As these authors stress, retaining language, culture, and

racial identity is not as handicapping as the ascribed role that restricted the indigenous minorities to an underclass status and limited assimilation in their own country.

In the United States the Business Council for Effective Literacy (BCEL) noted that a key advantage that immigrants have over indigenous minorities in gaining survival skills is the absence of a continued legacy of discrimination:

> For all the adversities, refugee and other immigrant groups have one advantage over indigenous limited-English speakers who are members of established minority groups. According to BCEL Advisor William Bliss, an expert in language education: "Refugees often prove to be exceptionally resilient. While the pain they have endured may remain with them for years, they often come to sense that arrival here represents a new beginning, an opportunity to rebuild their lives. They were most often members of the majority culture in their country of origin, and haven't been subject to the American minority experience. They haven't inherited a legacy of discrimination, urban decay, and welfare dependency. So their expectations and motivation are high, and the American dream is alive for them." The point is that it is as tough, maybe tougher, to address the skills, survival, and employment needs of the nation's long-established minority language communities as it is these same needs among the new arrivals (BCEL Newsletter, 1987, p. 4).

Based on cross-cultural studies, Ogbu (1978) found that racial minorities who voluntarily emigrate to new environments defined themselves as "outsiders" and "strangers" and did not expect to be culturally or racially assimilated into the mainstream. As a consequence, they were able to separate the school's skills-preparation function from its function to socialize students "into the white culture in America." The immigrants' motivation to achieve involved rejecting society's invidious comparisons, sterotypes, and scapegoating. By firmly maintaining their home culture and ethnic community as comparative reference points, they approached schooling with a pragmatic bicultural orientation where they ignored the school's efforts to replace their language and cultural heritage and selectively acculturated in order to maximize their preparation for the economic marketplace. First generation immigrants succeeded precisely because they maintained a firm grip on their language, ethnoracial identity, and culture, and acculturation occurred at their own pace. To the dominant society, however, their academic achievement and attainment of occupational skills were sufficient evidence of " their assimilation" and were used, in turn, to entreat indigenous minorities to acculturate fully into the mainstream in order to win the promise of assimilation.

Perhaps the most significant and hopeful implication from these comparative studies was that the deleterious effects of historical subjugation were reversed within one generation when minorities removed themselves from the society that imposed their subordinate caste status. For example, both the Japanese Buraku subgroup and Koreans, who were indigenous cultural minorities and were considered outcastes in Japan, did very poorly in its schools, but they achieved as well as other Asians when they emigrated to the United States; West Indians who were similar to the colonial British in language and culture but not in skin color did poorly in Britain, but did quite well in the United States where they were considered immigrants.

These observations raise serious questions about the proposition that the development of a "permanent underclass" due to "cultural deficits" or a "culture of poverty" is irreversible because the effects are internalized and become part of the community's way of life. Instead, they suggest that "poverty lifestyles" and ambivalent attitudes toward schooling are methods of coping with negative status and limited opportunities and do not become immutable and preferred cultural patterns. By releasing the group from its subordinate status and associated negative expectations and sanctions, many children achieve as well as others in school even within one generation. As a case in point, the children of Chinese peasants did remarkably better in school in the United States than their counterparts in China, but were still subjected to extreme forms of racial discrimination prior to World War II. Nevertheless, as "faithful allies" and "heroic victims" of the Japanese invaders, they were accorded a new, improved status coincidental with the shortage of workers during the war. As job ceilings improved, educational attainment increased markedly (Burkey, 1978, p. 370 and 384; Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi, 1986, p. 101-2).

Securing an educational policy that accounts for cultural relativism and racial and linguistic diversity and that fits schooling to the child's needs and strengths is a keystone for a preventive mental health program for ethnoracial minorities (Rappaport, 1977, p. 244-67). It seems easier, however, for schools to expect minority children to develop positive attitudes toward school in the face of limited expectations, English-only pressures, invidious ethnoracial comparisons, and uncertain economic futures than to modify routine curricula and relinquish acculturation as a condition for success. Schooling will remain a subversive activity for Latinos when they have to disregard the school's ethnocentrism, resist deculturation, and refuse to blame themselves for the school's failure to provide a proper education.

Finally, Latinos can come to terms with their identity in North American society by first coming to terms with their attitudes about coloration within themselves and in their families. Only then can the community prepare its children and itself to cope effectively with the prejudices that its members will encounter in life.

In this respect the Hispanic and Black communities can learn much from each other. First, there is information and direction for research to be gained from the Black experience. The following few ideas suggest the need for greater scholarly collaboration. Negative attitudes among Blacks toward darker members and the attendant feelings and conflicts aroused in new parents (Fuller and Geis, 1985) and in very young children, their parents, peers, and teachers (McDonald, 1970) are well documented and instructive for Latinos. Crawford's (1979) study of Black high school youths suggest that variation in skin color is associated with school adjustment, peer acceptance, and self-image much as is predicted for Latinos in this report. Harburg, et. al's (1973) finding that Black males with dark skin were significantly more likely to suffer from high blood pressure than their lighter cohorts suggests an area for investigation in the Hispanic community. They also found that the darker the skin, the lower the occupational level, education, and income and the greater the likelihood of their living in high stress residential areas. These consequences of phenotyping minorities are barely suggested by the residential patterns uncovered among Puerto Ricans by Seda Bonilla (1961) and among Mexican Americans by Gardner, et. al (1984).

Second, there are new, emerging issues that can be faced together. Middle class Black parents with clear memories of segregation and interracial strife are facing a new dilemma: preparing their children for the more subtle forms of discrimination that have accompanied civil rights gains and integration of public facilities (Morgan, 1985). Despite these gains Blacks are unable and

unwilling to ignore the reality of their limited assimilation into white society and they are preparing their children for it. Latinos can learn from the Black community's effort to develop acute social perceptiveness and a strong sense of ethnoracial pride in their children in order to help them anticipate and cope with potential interpersonal enigmas, from the sudden loss of some white friends when they begin dating to covert institutional discrimination. Latinos are familiar with social ambiguity and can share the Black parents' concern over the price of acculturation to mainstream values in a divided society: the erosion of cultural cohesion, the internalization of low expectation, the loss of ethnic awareness, self-esteem, and identity, and "the denial or dissipation of the rich diversity and special qualities ethnicity brings to society" (p. 4).

SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report has attempted to analyze the problems that skin color prejudice has created for many Latinos in Latin America and the United States. The emphasis on cultural identity, the group's social propensity, is reinforced by a need to conceal its racial roots as evidence of heterogeneity and dissimilarity from the dominant society in order to prevent the social and psychological assault that differential assimilation has on its members. The result is a slowing of the acculturation process where the pull toward reaping the potential educational, economic, and political rewards of cultural adaptation is balanced against the eventual demise of the Hispanic family and community.

The lack of concerted effort to understand the role of skin color in the development of the ethnoracial identity among Hispanic Americans has led to continued psychic problems for them, hidden the causes of real and potential divisiveness in the community, and prevented the development of effective strategies for overcoming ethnic prejudice. The roots of the Latinos' ethnoracial ambiguity were examined through the Puerto Rican experience, as well as their expressions in the contemporary life of Mexican Americans. A call for the study of institutional and interpersonal racial barriers was made in view of the paucity of current scientific study into the effect of skin coloration on the Latinos' lifestyle pursuits. While the content and form might differ, similar dominant-subordinate relationships may be played out in societies where skin color and culture are intermixed, half-acknowledged, but fully exploited.

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